

Preserve Hiking Trails



Backcountry Hiking Trails

The preserve's backcountry hiking trails are open daily between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. from May through October. From November through April, trails are open on weekends (weather permitting). Permits are required for the backcountry trails.

Scenic Overlook Trail – A 6.4-mile round-trip hike along the bus tour route to the scenic overlook area. Experience the beauty of native rolling prairie, as you take in the wide-open vistas of 1,490 feet above sea level.

3 Pasture Loop Trail – A 3.8-mile hike through upland prairie. This trail winds along existing ranch roads and a mowed path. From May through July, cattle graze here as they have for the past century.

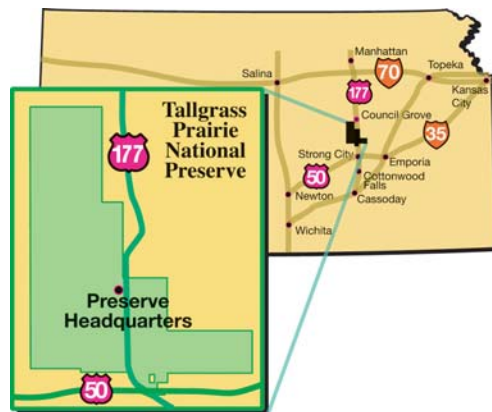
Red House Trail – A 6-mile hike through upland prairie and natural drainage areas. This trail passes through several historic ranching features, while giving an intimate view of wetland prairie flowers and vegetation through a scenic grove of cottonwood trees.

Frontcountry Nature Trails

The preserve's frontcountry nature trails are open year-round during daylight hours only. For visitor safety and resource preservation, we ask that visitors stay on the designated trails.

The Southwind Nature Trail – A 1 3/4-mile hiking trail through the tallgrass prairie, passing by the Lower Fox Creek School. Scenic overlook areas.

The Bottomland Trail – A 1/2 or 3/4-mile loop through bottomland prairie along Fox Creek. Wayside exhibits and information kiosk tell the story of the prairie restoration and cultural history. The trail is wheelchair accessible and offers a comfort station.



Location: The preserve headquarters is located:

- 2 miles north of Strong City on Kansas State Highway 177 (Flint Hills National Scenic Byway)
- 18 miles west of Emporia
- 16 miles south of Council Grove
- 85 miles northeast of Wichita

Hours: The historic ranch headquarters is open daily (except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day) from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Brochures and a 10-minute site orientation video are available in the barn (May – October) and on the back porch of the house (November – April).

A self-guided tour of the historic ranch headquarters is available daily between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. A brochure and wayside exhibits tell the story of Stephen F. Jones, who owned the ranch from 1878 to 1888.

The bookstore/gift shop in the ranch house is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Visitors may purchase books for children and adults, prints, postcards, educational and hand-crafted gift items, natural objects, and items related to local culture.

While in Chase County, make time to visit the towns of Strong City and Cottonwood Falls. Steeped in prairie history, these scenic communities will take you back in time. They offer dining, shopping, and much more.

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
2480 KS Hwy 177, Strong City, KS 66869
Telephone: 620-273-8494 Fax: 620-273-8950
Email: tapr_interpretation@nps.gov
Website: www.nps.gov/tapr



National Park Service mailing address:
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
P.O. Box 585, Cottonwood Falls, KS 66845

Kansas Park Trust Telephone: 620-273-8139
The Nature Conservancy www.nature.org/kansas



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
Strong City, Kansas



2009 Schedule of Events

Natural
History
Programs



Special
Events



Living History
Activities



2009 Weekend Activities

Natural History Programs

- **Guided Backcountry Hike** - At 10:30 a.m. (Sat and Sun) on the 2nd and 4th weekends of each month from June through October, enjoy a two-hour ranger led hike into the backcountry. Special natural history programs offered at 2:30 p.m. on Sat and Sun.



- **Prairie Seed Harvesting** - On the first Thursday of the month in June, July, September, and October help staff harvest prairie seeds from 9 a.m. to noon. The seeds will be used to restore bottomland prairie areas at the preserve. Call 620-273-8494 for details.

Cultural History Programs

- **Ranching Weekends** - On holidays and the 1st and 3rd weekends of each month from Memorial Day



throughout October, experience daily activities on a working ranch as you visit with living history interpreters. Special activities may include historic cooking, music, quilting, carpentry, roping, fence mending, gardening, saddling, and blacksmithing. Programs given at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

- **Old-time Music & Wool Spinning**

On the 1st Saturday of each month from June through October, listen to live music and watch wool spinning demonstrations.

- **Lower Fox Creek School** - Visit a one-room schoolhouse on weekends from noon until 4 p.m. in May, June, September, and October. Visit with National Park Service volunteers about the role the school played in the early days of education on the prairie. McGuffey readers, slates, recitation bench, and other exhibits are on display.



Daily Activities

Prairie Bus Tours - This 90-minute prairie bus tour is available daily from the last Saturday in April through the last Sunday in October.

Bus tour times - 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

\$5.00 per adult, \$3.00 age 5-18 years, 4 and under free.

House Tours - Tours are conducted hourly from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. from May through October. *House tour schedules vary November through April.*

2009 Special Events at the Preserve

The preserve offers a variety of activities including guided tours of the 1881 ranch house, living history programs, a Jr. Ranger booklet, natural history programs, prairie bus tours, nature trails, and backcountry hiking trails.

April 25 - Junior Ranger Day - Fun-filled day of Junior Ranger activities, including a Leave No Trace Scavenger Hunt. Earn a patch, badge, and certificate from park rangers.

May 9 - International Migratory Bird Count & Birds of Prey Program Assist the staff with a bird count starting at 7 a.m. (weather permitting). Call 620-273-8494 for details. At 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Vanessa Avara from the Milford Nature Center will introduce live birds of prey in the historic barn.



May 9 and 10 - Birding at the Preserve - National Park Service staff lead 90 minute birding hikes at 8 a.m. both days. An interpretive birding program will be given at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., with a children's workshop using self-constructed paper airplanes presented at 1 p.m.

May 23 - Children's Ranch Day - On Memorial Day Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. pet the farm animals, feed the chickens, and clean the stalls. **Kids can earn tokens and a Spring Hill Ranch certificate after doing their chores.**



May 24 - Children's Fishing Day - From 1 - 3 p.m. fish with the rangers at the Day Use Fishing Area. Fishing poles will be provided for an afternoon of catch-and-release fishing.

May 25 - School Day - On Monday join the school marm and experience the one-room school with penmanship lessons, spelling, and reading from the McGuffey Readers. School day is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Meet at the schoolhouse.

June 6 - Horse-drawn Haying Demonstration - From 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. experience an authentic horse-drawn haying and raking demonstration (weather permitting) in the field. Visit with living history interpreters as they prepare dinner for the harvesters.



June 13, 27 & July 11, 25 - Campfire Program Series - At 7 p.m. learn about different natural history topics around the campfire. An hour long nature trail hike completes the evening program at 9 p.m. Subjects include fire, birds, & more.

June 20 & 21 - Historic Farming Equipment - Once a year the barn's top floor is opened to view the historic farm machinery from 1920 to the 1940s. Watch a corn sheller in action and hear the ring of the blacksmith's hammer on Saturday as he demonstrates the art of metallurgy.

June 27 - Flint Hills NABA Butterfly Count - From 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. a day of butterfly counts in the Flint Hills. Call 620-273-6034 to reserve your space and a box lunch for a day of fun on the prairie.



July 3, 4, & 5 - Independence Day at the Ranch

★ On Friday, enjoy a day of music and clogging in the historic barn. Clogging demonstrations at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Historic barn dance from 6 p.m.-9 p.m. with the Tallgrass Express String band. Refreshments served.

★ On Saturday ride in a covered wagon, watch historic cooking demonstrations, and see the blacksmith hard at work.

★ On Sunday join in the historic games of an old-fashioned egg-toss, rope jumping, hoop and stick, and a lively bucket brigade. Activities from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Refreshments served.



September 5, 6, & 7 - Labor Day Weekend

Quilt Show - View local quilts displayed and watch quilting demonstrations all three days in the historic barn while voting for your favorites. Winners will be announced on Monday at 1 p.m.



September 12 & 13 - Prairie Wildflower Weekend -

Enjoy wildflower and medicinal plant hikes, Kansas Native Plant Society education programs, prairie bus tours, special speakers, nature trails, and more.



October Night Sky Programs - From 7 - 10 p.m.

view the Milky Way Galaxy in the preserve's backcountry. **Schedule is weather dependent. Reservations are required for this activity; \$5 per adult, \$3 children ages 5 - 18. Call 620-273-8494 in September for specific night sky viewing dates and program details.**



October 17 - Prairie Harvest Festival & Barn Dance -

Enjoy an old-fashioned harvest festival as living history characters get ready for winter. Cider making, hay rack rides, live music, blacksmithing, and pumpkin carving from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Barn dance from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. with the Tallgrass Express String band. Refreshments served.



November 28 - December 31 - Holiday Ranch House

The historic ranch house and headquarters area are decorated with natural objects and greenery representing an 1880s historic holiday setting. Special open house event on November 28th. Refreshments served.

